

## Boston College's international Focus

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During the 1980s, a new awareness of the need for internationalization of the American campus took hold in universities nationwide. The traditional study abroad program based in a foreign language department or run by a specialized organization was insufficient to the challenges posed by rapid globalization; what were needed, it was thought, were coordinated, innovative university-level interdisciplinary initiatives, as well as a move from isolated department-level programs toward intra-institutional cooperation.

Recognizing this need, Boston College (BC) created the Office of International Programs (OIP) in 1991. OIP was given a broad mandate to coordinate efforts and promote a global emphasis across the university and to develop institutionwide study, research, and service opportunities abroad for students and faculty. The result of this initiative is that in 1997 BC has a network of more than 40 active international partnerships; faculty and administrators are traveling in unprecedented numbers—last year alone more than 30 faculty and administrators visited partner universities to evaluate curriculum and develop research collaborations; the proportion of BC undergraduates studying abroad has more than doubled; and we have the added value of more than 50 exchange students annually from top universities worldwide—across all levels and disciplines—contributing to the international energy on campus. More than 400 Undergraduates will participate in semester, full-year, summer, or intersession programs abroad in 1996–97. With the exception of a successful Irish Studies-administered exchange with University College Cork, until 1991 BC students traditionally withdrew from the university to study abroad with the help of the Foreign Study Office, which was created in the early 1970s. Undergraduate participation in study abroad in externally administered programs grew from 6 students in 1970 to 200 in 1990. In its survey of 1995 and 1996 the *Chronicle of Higher Education* listed BC among the top 15 doctoral institutions in the number of students studying abroad.

Key to accomplishing our objectives has been the establishment of programs in important developing world regions, programs with universities having complementary curricula across the disciplines. In 1997–98 BC will administer programs—many with Jesuit institutions—in such

non-traditional destinations as China, Ecuador, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea, Morocco, Mexico, the Philippines, Poland, Russia, and South Africa.

The success of BC in international development is based on a strategy of innovation and small, flexible infrastructure. Increasingly, our partner universities are offering strong on-site support for visiting students, enabling BC to serve students abroad at low cost. Moreover, offset student exchange ratios that replace outgoing students with tuition-paying undergraduates generate budget resources adequate to provide excellent on-site benefits, financial aid, research and travel support for faculty, fellowships enabling exchange students and scholars to join the BC community, and related programming on and off campus. These partnerships also provide opportunities for graduate students through assistantships and fellowships. Examples include a pioneer program with Eichstatt Catholic University in Germany, under which a graduate student in history is teaching a course in post-modernism, and a new Madrid program that provides two graduate fellowships for summer language study in Spain.

An example of a model partnership funded largely by the exchange of undergraduates is that with the University of Amsterdam. UA's broad English-language curriculum allows the exchange of undergraduate and graduate students in arts and sciences, management, education, and law. Faculty from a wide range of disciplines are involved in short- or long-term joint teaching and research projects. Creative curriculum development will be demonstrated by a forthcoming semester-long undergraduate program in Amsterdam to focus on Flemish art, a program involving collaboration between BC and UA faculty that involves the world's foremost Rembrandt scholar. A BC-UA administrative exchange is coordinated by BC's Center for International Higher Education. Currently, the sociology departments of the two universities are engaged in a faculty exchange. Other faculty in such diverse fields as physics, law, and accounting are also participating in visits or exchanges.

Undergraduate international programs at BC are designed to promote academic maturity and independence. In order to prepare students for rigorous immersion programs abroad, we provide comprehensive orientation programs prior to departure and on-site support to guide students through academic challenges. For example, in many countries, less emphasis is placed on continuous assessment than on final exams—which may range from a four-hour written exam to a ten-minute oral—requiring students to take a more long-term view to learning than they would at home. While the prospect of working in a

dramatically different academic setting may seem daunting, the benefits of this type of experience in intellectual and personal growth can be enormous. In order to ensure fair and consistent transfer of credits and grades, BC is working with our partners worldwide to develop harmonious assessment procedures following the model of the European Community on the implementation of a standard credit (ECTS) system. As part of this process, BC is currently conducting a nationwide research project, in conjunction with Association of International Education Administrators to analyze current U.S. assessment methods for international study to propose more regularized policies and procedures nationwide.

By creating new curriculum for students and programmatic opportunities for students and faculty, BC aims to make the international experience an integral part of university life. Developments on campus include new courses taught by directors of the foreign study office and OIP for outgoing and returning students; a “peer-advising” program in the OIP and an “International Assistant” program in the Intercultural Office together actively involve more than 100 returning students in counseling, promotion, and program development. The *International Letter*, published three times a year by OIP, informs faculty about international opportunities at BC, highlights research with an international focus, and provides a forum for discussion on global issues.

Fostering the involvement of BC faculty, deans, and other administrators in international programming has been a particularly rewarding area of development. Faculty are advising students to study abroad with ever-growing enthusiasm and understanding, traveling to destinations they would never have visited five years ago, participating in interdisciplinary on-campus roundtable discussions on global issues—ranging from the arts, civil society, and children’s rights, to the sciences—and pursuing collaborative research projects with colleagues at partner universities worldwide. Academic departments are responding to OIP initiatives by creating departmental international committees; and faculty, deans, and administrators from all divisions of the university are active in the OIP advisory committee.

OIP is also committed to promoting alliances with public- and private-sector organizations. It works with a wide range of government agencies and businesses to provide international internship programs, career services, and lectures. Management students enroll in BC-administered summer internships in France, Australia, China, and Ireland; nursing students complete community nursing projects in destinations as diverse as Australia, Ecuador, and Scotland; and international teaching practicums are available around the world. Our Jesuit and Catholic links en-

able us to provide service opportunities for our students here and abroad: our first three students have returned from a pioneer program at the Ateneo de Manila University that combines academic work with a month-long community service project; incoming international students are involved in OIP service projects in a local school, food pantry, and retirement home.

## News of the Center for International Higher Education and the Program in Higher Education at Boston College

The Program in higher education has been designated by Boston College as one of its “nationally competitive” doctoral programs and has been authorized to add one new faculty position. The Program will conduct a search for a faculty member shortly. Additional funds for student support have also been provided. Boston College’s University Academic Planning Council, charged with strengthening the University for the 21st century, specifically recognized the Higher Education Program as worthy of additional support.

The Administrative Fellows Program, part of the Higher Education graduate program at Boston College, has organized a well-received series of lectures on higher education issues. This year’s series is cosponsored by the J. Donald Monan, SJ Chair. The speakers include Patrick Seyon, former president of the University of Liberia, Roger Geiger of Pennsylvania State University, Julie Reuben, Kai Ming Cheng, and Richard Cbait of Harvard, Lester Goodchild of the University of Denver, J. Brazziel of Spelman College, and others. Administrative Fellows are graduate students in higher education who are funded for their graduate study at Boston College and assist in various administrative offices on campus and participate in a seminar series relating their work to their academic studies.

The editorial office of the *Review of Higher Education* is located in the Higher Education Program at Boston College. Philip G. Altbach is editor, and Karen Arnold and Ted Youn serve as associate editors. Liz Reisherg, a doctoral student in higher education, is the managing editor. The *Review* is one of the central research journals in the field of higher education.

James JF Forest, the Center’s technical assistant for nearly three years, has been hired as technology specialist for the National Center for Urban Partnerships. The Urban Partnerships Program is an initiative sponsored by the Ford Foundation to help urban students successfully complete baccalaureate degrees. NCUP helps create city-wide partnerships that include K-16 educators and representatives from community, corporate, and political sectors.